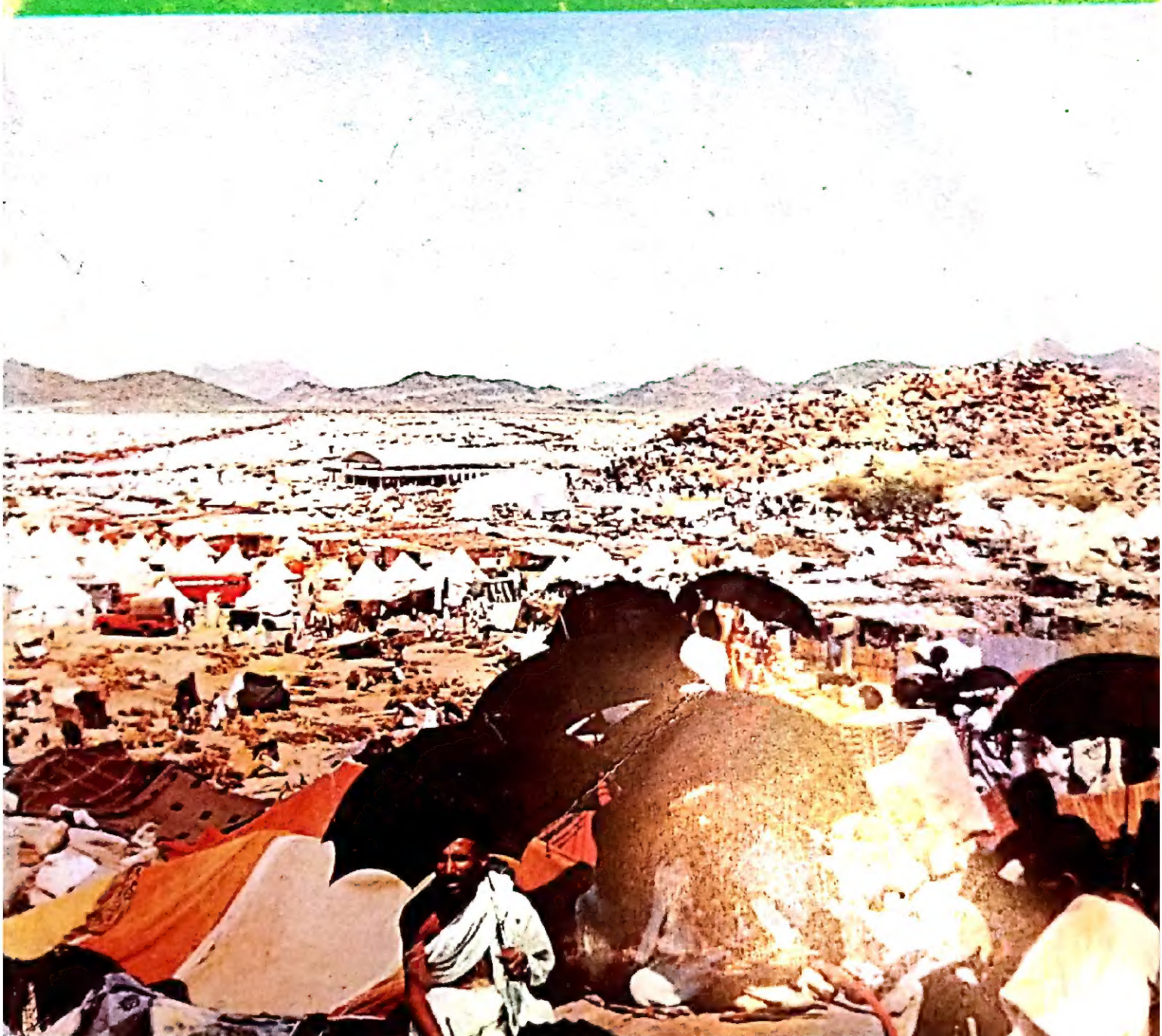


THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
FACTS AND FIGURES

IN THE SERVICE OF ISLAM





"We stretch our hands and extend our warm friendship to all our arab brethren, in the fullest sense of the word. Indeed, we are eager to attain that most desirable ideal, complete arab unity.

We cannot however forget that due to its geographical situation, and the presence of Islam's most holy shrines on its territory, this country possesses certain sanctified islamic features which distinguish it from the others.

We hold Islam holy above all things; all our efforts tend to serve Islam, first and foremost. We consider Islam to be the very cornerstone of our lives."

**Quotation from a Speech
by H.M. King Fayçal
Djeddah 20, 1963**

The Original Homeland of Islam

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and a land filled with its great history. It was from the holy city of Mecca that the faithful Prophet Mohammed Ben Abdullah launched his call to Muslims. This same call was to spread east and west, destroying in its path profanity, persecution, and dissension, replacing them with faith, freedom, and unity instead.

It was only a short period before the islamic-arab state restored its authority over the older world, rebuilding its new modern state on the rubble of the destroyed Persian and Roman powers.

In spite of the expansion of the state, of its territory its influence, and the successive transfers of its administrative

capital from Damascus, to Baghdad, to Cairo, then to Istanbul, the Holy city of Mecca remained the spiritual capital of muslims all over the world, who met there every year at the pilgrimage season, or turned towards it five times a day in their prayers uttering the sacred words: "ALLAHU AKBAR" —God is the Greatest.

The arabs in particular, and muslims in general, were always able to record victories by looking towards the Holy Kaaba (The Rock) which represents the symbol of their historical strength. Their subsequent misfortunes, the various defeats suffered by the arabs, the tragedies and catastrophes which overtook them, all these factors caused them to look more and more towards it, and to cling to it. Thus, politics, the course of life, dissensions, and defeat divided the arabs, but in spite of all this the Holy Kaaba remained the symbol of their profound unity.

Thus was the Arab peninsula—now the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—the original homeland from whence they started, and occupying in their lives and history the main place. It is the scene of their great historical achievements, and the land of their holy shrines.

Pilgrimage in connexion with Islam :

Islam is faith and is law; in other words, it means belief and action.

What is faith, but the extent of a belief in God, his Scriptures, his Prophets, his Angels, the Day of Judgement, Fate and Destiny...

As for islamic law, it consists of four expressions of worship which constitute its four pillars. These are: fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, and charity.

In the holy Prophet's teachings, Islam is based on five elements :

- Proclaiming that there is no other God than God, and that Mohammed is His Prophet.
- Praying regularly.
- Giving tithes (charity).
- Fasting the month of Ramadan.
- Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, if one's means allow it.

The pilgrimage therefore is one of the four elements of worship, imposed upon those who can afford it; and as for

those who cannot, they are dispensed from the obligation.

Originally, the pilgrimage was instituted by Ibrahim Al-Khalil, peace be upon his soul; he was the one who received orders from Allah to build the Holy Shrine, in order that people could gather there in great multitudes, and praise His name.

Thus did Ibrahim (peace be upon him) carry out the orders of his God, and build the House, calling upon the faithful to come and pray. And thus came the arabs to worship their God.



However, with the passing of ages and time, people introduced some changes into the pilgrimage, associating idols with God, setting these up around the Kaaba, and sacrificing to these idols. With the coming of Islam and the Prophet, these sacrilegious practices were abolished, and the Kaaba was cleansed from all impure rites.

Subsequently, Allah sent down His Laws concerning the Pilgrimage, indicating the season and the various rules governing it.

Ever since, Muslims all over the world face the Kaaba five times a day in their prayers; those who have the means effect a pilgrimage to it once or more in their lifetime, at the prescribed season. And so the pilgrimage remained one of the pillars of islamic worship.

For the past thirteen centuries, the Pilgrimage—in addition to its function as a religious duty—has constituted the main source of income for the city of Mecca and the region known as "the Hedjaz" in the arabian peninsula.

At one time, and during long periods of its history, the country was beset by grave problems of insecurity; this affected the zeal of muslims towards pilgrimage,

and discouraged many people from performing their religious duty.

When, therefore, King Abdul Aziz unified most of the arabian peninsula and created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within its present known boundaries, establishing law and order throughout the land for the first time in its troubled history, muslims found their zeal renewed for the performance of their religious duties, and the number of pilgrims increased considerably.

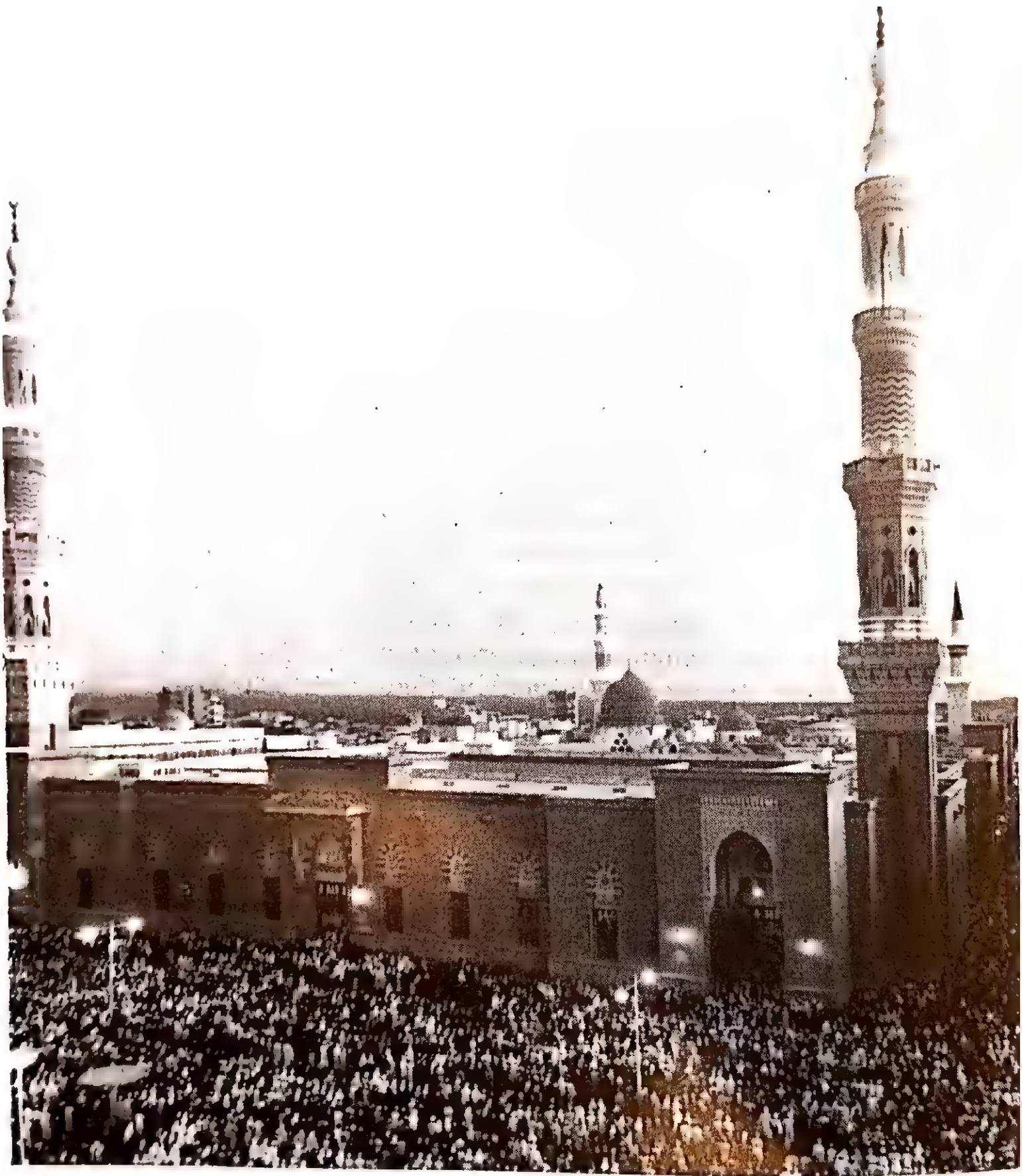
With time and the evolution of means of transport, as well as the restoration of public security, the main problem became the availability of pilgrimage facilities, and of the various services which it became necessary to offer all pilgrims. Thus instead of the pilgrimage remaining one of the sources of income, the state undertook the responsibility of meeting the expenses and compensating the deficit of the pilgrims in many cases, being conscious of its duty towards millions of muslims. And for the first time in history, the amounts disbursed by the state on pilgrimage facilities exceeded the income of the treasury from this event.

Extending the Sites of the Shrines :

Another consequence of the restoration of public security and the resulting increase in pilgrims' desires to perform their sacred devotions, was the problem of space in the two mosques : the mosque of the Holy Shrine at Mecca, and the Prophet's mosque at the Medina. The government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia had to cope with this problem by considering the expansion of the two premises, in order to render them fit to receive the tens of thousands of pilgrims flocking there at the pilgrimage season every year, or at other seasons as well.

These works started on the Holy Prophet's Mosque in 1951 A.D.—1370 Hegira—, following a proclamation by the late King Abdul Aziz (God grant him Peace) to all muslims, announcing his decision to enlarge the mosque premises.

The next step was to expropriate the neighbouring buildings, compensate the owners, demolish these constructions surrounding the Mosque, and remove the rubble. This work lasted for two whole years.



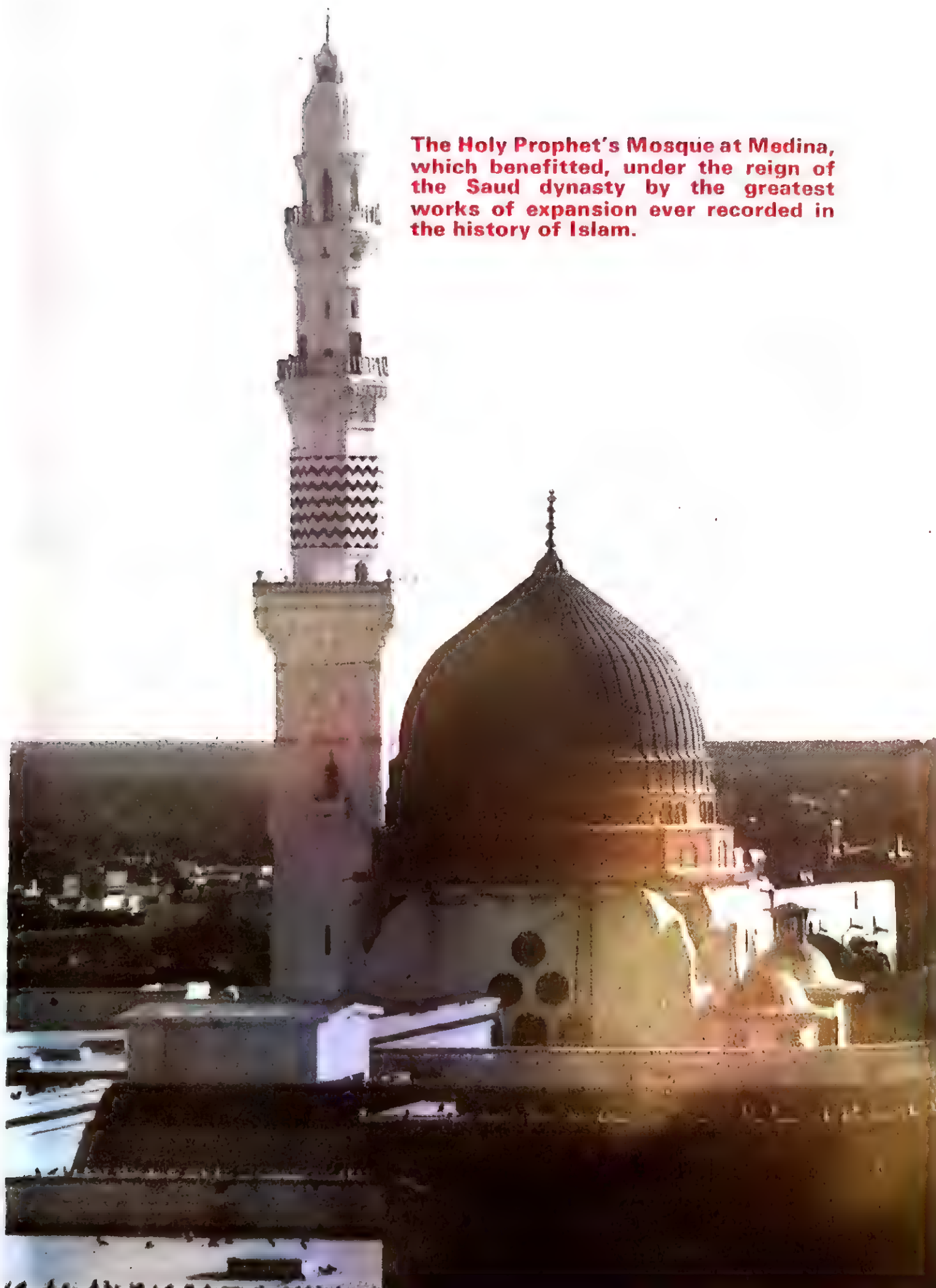
On November 20, 1953—13.3.1373 Hegira—a great official celebration took place, attended by all the plenipotentiaries and representatives of arab states and islamic countries, in addition to thousands of Saudi citizens. During this memorable occasion, the foundation stone for the new works was laid in one of the corners of the two walls, just behind the "Gate of Mercy".

These extension works included the construction of buildings and stores at the western end of the mosque, to provide for the good care and maintenance of the holy shrine and its foundations. These works were completed by the middle of 1955 A.D.—1374 Hegira, and were exploited for the benefit of the mosque.

As for the basic works of enlargement, these started in 1375 Hegira—on October 22, 1955 A.D. All arabs and muslims celebrated the event which filled them with joy, and there flowed in numerous expressions of appreciation and grateful feelings for this excellent initiative.

The extension works performed on the premises of the Holy Prophet's shrine

**The Holy Prophet's Mosque at Medina,
which benefitted, under the reign of
the Saud dynasty by the greatest
works of expansion ever recorded in
the history of Islam.**



cost 50.000.000 Rials, or 11.000.000 Dollars.

These works comprised :

The removal after demolition of 22.955 square metres of houses surrounding the mosque, of which area 6024 square metres were added to the latter, thus bringing the new area of the mosque up to 16.326 square metres.

This is considered to be the greatest extension yet effected on the mosque during its whole history. At the time of God's Prophet—Peace and prayers be upon him its original surface was 2475 sq. metres. Subsequently, the Caliph Rashed Omar Bin Khattab added 1.1000 square metres to it; after him, Caliph Osman Bin Affan added another 496 square metres; next, the Omayyad Caliph Al-Walid Bin Abdel Malik enlarged it by 2369 sq. metres; following in his wake, the Abbaside Caliph Al-Mahdi Bin Mansur increased the area by 2450 square metres; after him, the great king Kaitbay extended it by another 120 square metres, and finally, the Osmanite Sultan Abdel-Hamid II, added 1293 sq. metres to the mosque area.

The internal pillars of the Holy Prophet's Mosque, numbering 232 pillars, the foundations of which are five metres deep.



Thus, the Saudi works of enlargement are the greatest that have been recorded in the history of Islam on the Holy Prophet's Mosque.

- 232 pillars were erected inside the mosque, with foundations five metres deep.
- Two new minarets were added, each having foundations 17 metres deep, and each minaret being 70 metres high.

The modern buildings added to the mosque covered three sides of the site, included 44 windows, and attained a total length of 347 metres. Of this extra length, the eastern and western sides shared 128 metres, whereas the northern flank was lengthened by 91 metres.

Extension of Al-Haram, Mosque of the Holy Shrine, Mecca :

The extension works on the holy Prophet's mosque at the Medina were barely completed, when the government of Saudi Arabia decided to enlarge the Al-Haram Mosque of the Holy Shrine at Mecca. A high commission was formed to supervise this project and its implementation; the head of this commission was the former Prince Fayçal, now King Fayçal.

On April 5, 1956, a great official ceremony marked the laying of the foundation stone for the extension works. And the job started.

Hereunder, the reader will find some figures which will give him an idea of the magnitude of this project, and the amounts expended on it.

- The total cost of the extension works on the Al-Haram Mosque of the Holy Shrine at Mecca exceeded 700.000.000 Rials, or 155.000.000 Dollars. This includes both the costs



The stone-throwing ceremony at Mena.

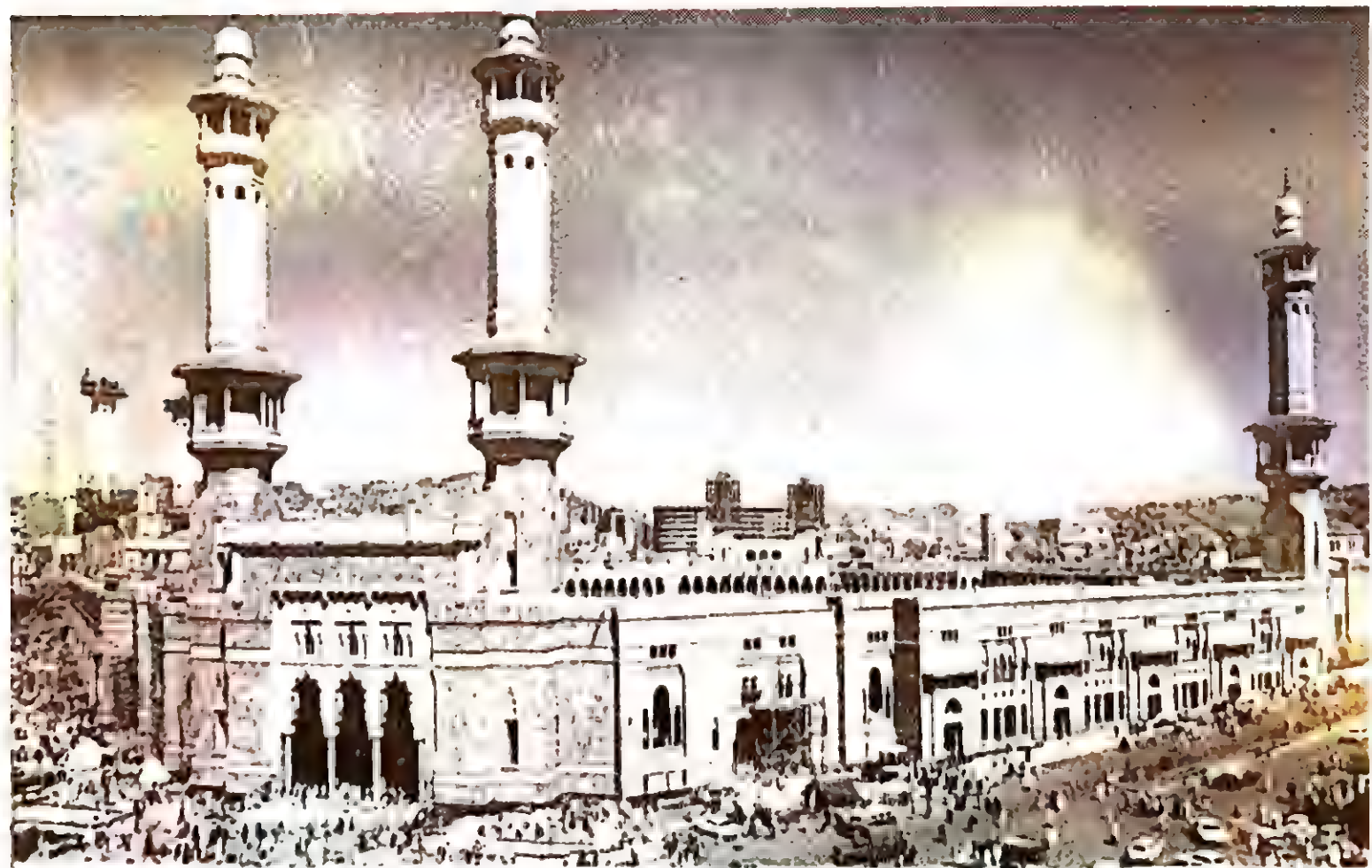
Commemoration-day on Mount Arafat.





The Sacred Qaaba seen from within.

An outer view of the Sacred Qaaba : "Bab-As-Salam" (The Gate of Peace)



of expropriation and construction, especially the expropriation of property surrounding the Mosque. These costs of expropriation alone attained 320.000.000 Rials, and the total cost of construction works was 391.000.000 Rials

- The total volume of buildings demolished and cleared from the site was 227.000 cubic metres.
- The mosque's area before these works was 29.127 sq. metres; after enlargement, it became 160.168 sq. metres; this represents an increase of 131.041 square metres.
- After this extension and the works performed, the Holy Shrine can receive and contain 300.000 pilgrims in all, at one time.
- The whole building was covered with marble slabs; this necessitated the use of 99.000 square metres of marble of the most beautiful vein.
- After the extension of the site, the area around the Holy Shrine can contain 4000 cars, without blocking the Roads.
- Roads 30 metres wide were built





Al-Massaa', seen from the interior. View between the "Safa" and the "Marwa", after being enlarged.

around the Shrine.

- There are presently three towers in the mosque; four others will be erected thus bringing the total number to seven towers, as originally existed in the Shrine before it was enlarged. The height of these is 90 metres.
- The project of enlargement provided for the four means of access to the mosque, and four large courtyards to surround it on its four sides. In the midst of these, the courtyard adjoining As-Safa, or place of devotions. The House of Arkam (a friend of the Holy Prophet) which is the house from whence the Prophet Mohammed, God's prayers and peace be upon him, left in the company of his friend, to pray together and proclaim the Faith, will thus be situated in the centre of this courtyard, and will be used as a centre of publication of islamic culture.
- As a result of the extension works carried out, the Worship and Mas'aa yard is now inside the Holy Mosque; it has been enclosed by doors and windows of thick opaque glass, to shield it from view.

The Worship or procession 'Mas'aa yard will be separated from the commercial quarters by a large garden running alongside it.

The extension works were not limited to the above improvements only : it was discovered that the roof and walls of the Kaaba Shrine contained cracks and other defects. These were repaired and made good by the present regime of Saudi Arabia, thus fulfilling the hopes of all muslims in the government which has the safeguard of the Holy Shrines and is dedicated to the service of these in the homeland of Islam.

The Largest Quarantine and Sanitary Quarters :

The large increase in the numbers of pilgrims, encouraged by the instauration of public security, stability, and numerous other factors of modern evolution, has imposed many other duties on the government of Saudi Arabia, besides

those already performed in ensuring the necessary facilities for pilgrims. The government has met all its commitments in this respect, confirming its readiness to fulfil its islamic duty, and fully living up to its spiritual responsibilities in all respects. Thus, in its concern for the pilgrims' health, it built sanitary quarters which form probably the largest quarantine in the world, It covers an area of 228.000 square metres, and comprises in all 150 buildings. It is divided into two sections, one of which contains 64 buildings and is the main quarantine block This section includes an additional 16 buildings devoted to sampling and analyses, and equipped with the most modern sanitary instruments and medical equipment.

The second section contains the administrative offices, the fumigation chambers, the public baths, the laundry and drying equipment, a modern bacteriological laboratory, and a sanitary training school. In the centre of the quarantine area a general hospital was built, with a capacity of over forty beds, and equipped with an operating-theatre, an X-Ray chamber, and a pharmaceutical department.

This quarantine centre can contain 2408 persons in all, and cost a total of 15.000.000 Rials, or 3.300.000 Dollars.

It has amply fulfilled the sanitary aims it was built for; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has provided the pilgrims with all the best up-to-date sanitary services, establishing the quarantine, furnishing mobile sanitary units, and organizing various other health services, all of which have led to the abolition of the international sanitary supervision on pilgrims, which was being exercised by the World Health Organization for over a century!

Roofed compounds and Pilgrimage Taxes :

The Saudi Arabian government also built five compounds with concrete roofs, three of these at Arfa, one at Mana, and one at Mazdelfa. Each of these compounds or resthouses can shelter three to five thousand pilgrims under its roof. The main object of these resthouses is to shelter the aged pilgrims and those who lose their way or find the roads encumbered with great numbers of pilgrims. In these shelters, all

their needs are supplied, and the various services are offered free of charge, until such time as they are able to reach their destination with the help of guides.

The government of Saudi Arabia inaugurated these services by cancelling the taxes imposed on pilgrims as from 1944 A.D.—1364 Hegira.

Yet all the services offered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to its pilgrims are not merely restricted to enlarging the sites of the shrines, providing medical and sanitary care, or abolishing the pilgrimage taxes, even though such services and the pilgrims' requirements are constantly increasing, year after year.

The fact that four hundred thousand pilgrims from abroad, and about twice that number from the interior, in all about one million pilgrims are all converging on the holy shrines together, at one time and place, definitely raises complex problems for the authorities.

All the state's machinery in the fields of security, health, transport and communications is therefore mobilized at this season to cope with the various problems arising, and to ensure adequate care for the pilgrims, providing them with all

the facilities which would enable them to perform their sacred duty in complete tranquility and peace of mind.

The state has exerted considerable efforts, and continues to work towards an improvement of the means of communication in order to keep abreast with the increase in the numbers of pilgrims. This, alone, represents a great burden. For instance, Djeddah's airport, at the pilgrimage season, registers a number of daily flights exceeding 130 flights. Such dense traffic implies the availability of a high standard of services and the presence of a competent working organization.

If a survey is made on what the state spends for the care and welfare of pilgrims, extending security and other services to render their pilgrimage safe and pleasant, the result shows that each pilgrim receives a value of 200 Rials only in services. Yet, this means that the state is standing the expense of 80.000.000 Rials for 400.000 pilgrims from abroad only; if the number of Saudi pilgrims is added to those from abroad, viz. 600.000 to 700.000 then the total expenditure borne by the state every year for services and care of the pilgrims exceeds 220.000.000 Rials, or

50.000.000 Dollars U.S.

Another indication that this is the lowest estimate possible, is furnished by the figures of the budget of the Ministry of Pilgrimage for 1971—1391 Hegira—This figure exceeds 88.000.000 Rials, or 20.000.000 Dollars. The Ministry of Pilgrimage was created with the object of ensuring the care and welfare of pilgrims, organizing the pilgrimage and supervising it in all its details, making it safe and pleasant for all.

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The Call of Islam :



All the service, the care, the extension works and other facilities did not constitute the only aspects in which the Kingdom served Islam and muslims all over the world.

Another feature of this service was the call of Islam : King Fayçal Bin Abdel Aziz, king of Saudi Arabia, carried the torch himself which cast its light around the land and beyond its boundaries.

This was another aspect of the King's policy in the service of Islam.

This Call produced its fruits, first at the Rabat Summit Conference, then at the Djeddah and Karachi Conferences of Foreign Ministers; from these meetings emerged the Conference's Secretariat based in Djeddah. Thus did islamic cooperation become a reality, after it had been nothing more than a distant dream!

The call was motivated by a sincere desire on the part of muslim leaders to get together to discuss matters affecting their vast world, and to consolidate the relationship between them, after they had been divided by events. This responsibility befell the Kingdom particularly, and to a greater extent than any other arab or islamic state, due to its particular situation.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia happens to be the cradle of the Call to Islam, the first land from whence it originated and was propagated throughout the universe, until the great state was created. It was islamic, inasmuch as it was arabic.

And as mentioned previously, the Kingdom is the "Kublah" of all muslims, towards which they turn their faces five times a day in prayer, morning, noon, evening, sunset, and night. And to the

Holy Kaaba, wherein lies the House of Allah, hundreds of thousands of these faithful perform their pilgrimage every year, becoming "Hajjis."

This is the reason why the Call to Islam became not only its sacred duty and responsibility, but its right as well. And because it found a favourable response to its call, as subsequent events and experience showed, its sound judgement and wise action were proven.

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In the service of Islam : that is how the policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can best be described, and the action of its leader, Fayçal Abdul Aziz. It is a policy dictated by its history and by its reality, inspired by its faith and heritage

And it will persevere in maintaining this policy, as long as the words "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest) will be clamoured by millions of believers.



**Ministry
of Information**

